Assessing the Feasibility of Developing a Resource Centre for Internationally-Trained Professionals and Trades People in Hamilton

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Prepared for
Settlement and Integration Services Organization (SISO)

by

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

With funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Settlement and Integration Services Organization (SISO) contracted the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton (SPRC) to assess the feasibility of developing a local employment resource centre for internationally-trained professionals and trades people.

During 2001, Settlement and Integration Services Organization gathered information from local employers and newcomers through a series of surveys, interviews, focus groups, round-table discussions and public forums. Findings were related to service and support needs and strategies to connect internationally-trained workers to the local labour force. With this information as a foundation, SISO moved to formally investigate local service and support issues and needs.

On April 25, 2002, SISO organized and hosted a consultation meeting to discuss how to assess the feasibility of developing a resource centre for internationally-trained professionals and trades people. Attendance at the consultation meeting included forty-four representatives of local, provincial and federal government departments, employment service providers, training and education institutions, regulatory bodies and local employers. Input was gathered from participants based on the following four questions:

- "In your opinion, what are the main questions the feasibility study needs to answer?"
- "In your opinion, what are the research methods that should be used by the study?"
- "In your opinion, who should be interviewed or surveyed for the purpose of this study?"
- "In your opinion, who are the main potential partners in the project?"

(See APPENDIX A for a record of proceedings from the consultation meeting)

The consultation meeting was the first step in establishing the parameters of this study, which was initiated in October 2002.

The study was directed by an advisory committee, which met regularly during the course of the study to review progress and provide direction. The committee, Chaired by Liz Robinson, Executive Director of the Hamilton Training and Advisory Board, was comprised of representatives from local, provincial and federal government departments, local employment service providers and local employers (See APPENDIX B for a full list of advisory committee members).

Many of the committee members had participated in SISO's April 2002 forum, and agreed to continued support of the process.

Defined by the advisory committee, the purpose of this study was to "examine appropriate strategies and service delivery models by incorporating an inventory of existing services and an assessment of local needs for support services for internationally-trained professionals/trades people and employers". The report focuses on programs and services provided at the community-level, comparing research on 'best practices' in connecting internationally-trained professionals and trades people to employment in their field, to the types and levels of services currently provided in Hamilton.

The term "best practices", for the purpose of the study, refers to those employment programs and services that address identified and documented barriers to employment for internationally-trained professionals and trades people, and incorporate a set of core values (core values associated with best practices are included in section 3.0 of this report). Through the course of the study, six specific service types were identified, including: providing up-to-date information (ie. information about the labour market, local employers, licensing processes, etc.), job search supports, credential assessment, English language training, programs that directly connect clients to employers and volunteer/placement opportunities, and an accessible database which links clients with local employers.

In other regions of the province, there are agencies that assess employment service needs on an individual basis, and refer clients to the most appropriate community service. In Toronto for example, Skills for Change and the Centre for foreign-Trained Professionals and Tradespeople use delivery agents specialized in providing programs and services which address the needs of internationally-trained. Specifically they provide information, coaching and marketing and ultimately link them with the employers. In Hamilton however, existing programs and services that support internationally-trained professionals and trades people are provided through a number of service delivery agents, with no formal coordination.

Advisory committee members agreed that while specific types of services identified as best practices should be provided at an adequate level in Hamilton, a range of service delivery models should be considered. From this perspective, the study considers how services, currently provided in Hamilton, might be enhanced to meet both local demand and best practice standards. Specifically, the report will consider the Kitchener-Waterloo service delivery model, which incorporates a central assessment and referral service.

The report provides an analysis of best practices, and considers best practices in the context of Hamilton's existing service delivery system.

Following a summary and discussion of findings, the report provides a set of recommendations that would result in a coordinated system of service delivery in Hamilton, and would enhance our local capacity to connect internationally-trained professionals and trades people to employment in their fields.

2.0 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design employed in this study involves a range of quantitative and qualitative methods. To ensure a range of perspectives were included in the study, consultations were conducted with representatives from key stakeholder groups, including internationally-trained professionals and trades people (both employed in their field and not employed in their field), local employment service providers, local employers and, regulatory bodies. Consultations took the form of surveys, focus groups and telephone interviews. A forum held early in the research process included formal presentations from the New Canadians Program, Skills for Change, the Centre for Foreign-Trained Professionals and Tradespeople and the World Education Service. An additional presentation by representatives of the Employment Assessment Service in Kitchener-Waterloo was conducted with members of the project advisory committee.

Research began with a review of literature related to internationally-trained workers and the Canadian and local labour force (see REFERENCES section for a full list of reviewed literature). The purpose of the literature review was to develop a better understanding of the employment issues and barriers facing internationally-trained workers, and to identify best practices in terms of community-level services and supports. The term "best practices", for the purpose of the study, refer to those programs and services that address identified and documented barriers to employment for internationally-trained professionals and trades people, and incorporate a set of core values.

The first phase of consultations with key stakeholders involved a survey method. Short surveys were conducted with internationally-trained professionals and trades people, local employers and, local employment service providers (see APPENDIX C for copies of each survey). Included in this section are profiles of each stakeholder group surveyed. Focus groups were held with internationally-trained professionals and trades people. A total of 31 individuals participated in two separate groups.

Key informant interviews were also held with a range of key stakeholders. Five interviews were conducted with local employers representing small, medium and large sized companies; three interviews were conducted with local employment service providers; three interviews were conducted with representatives from professional associations and trade unions, and three interviews with internationally-trained professionals employed in their field. To eliminate any potential bias on the part of the researcher, advisory committee members were asked to review and approve the list of key informants.

3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Background

While Canada has been quite successful in attracting well-educated and skilled workers from abroad, we have fallen short in our efforts to connect internationally-trained professionals and trades people to employment in their field of study. In fact, a report from The Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (2002) shows an unemployment rate of 18.2% among immigrant professionals during 2002, while the average unemployment rate in Ontario was only 5.4%.

Trends like this should be of particular concern for the City of Hamilton. According to Statistics Canada's 2001 census, more than one-quarter of the population of the Hamilton census metropolitan area were foreign-born. This represents the third highest proportion of foreign-born residents among such urban areas in Canada, surpassed only by Toronto and Vancouver.

The following table shows the immigrant population as a proportion of the total population, comparing the City of Hamilton, Ontario, and Canada . While the proportion of immigrants in Hamilton is slightly less than that for Ontario (26.5% and 27.8% respectively), it is much higher than the proportion of immigrants in Canada as a whole (19.3%).

Table 1: The Immigrant Population as a Proportion of the Total Population, Comparing the City of Hamilton, Ontario and Canada - 2001 Census Data

Location	Total Population	Immigrant Population	Proportion of Immigrants by total population
Hamilton	490,268	129,732	26.5%
Ontario	11,410,000	3,172,274	27.8%
Canada	30,007,094	5,788,229	19.3%

Source: from HR Matters, 2002 - Statistics Canada - Special Tabulations - Small Area Data Division

Through the 1990's, immigration was responsible for an average of eighty percent (80%) of Canada's annual population growth, and 70% of Canada's Labour Force growth. This trend also occurred in Hamilton. As shown in Table 2, new immigrants to Hamilton represented 83.1% of the population growth between 1990 and 1994, and 84.1% between 1995 and 1999. Given current trends, it is expected that new immigrant arrivals will represent 100% of population growth in coming years. This

trend will have a direct impact on the local labour force, resulting in a higher proportion of newcomers.

Table 2: New Immigrant Arrivals in Hamilton as a proportion of Total Population Growth

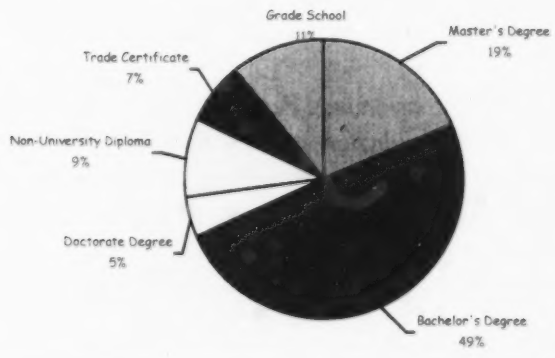
Year	Population Growth	New Immigrant Arrivals	New Immigrants as % of Population Growth
1990-1994	19,613	16,292	83.1%
1995-1999	22,460	18,900	84.1%

Source: from HR Matters, 2002 - Statistics Canada - Special Tabulations - Small Area Data Division

Persons wishing to immigrate to Canada apply under one of 6 categories, including family class, refugee, business, skilled workers, dependents of business, and other applicants and dependants. For the most part, internationally-trained professionals and trades people would apply as "skilled workers". According to the City of Hamilton's HR Matters report (2002), those persons applying under the "skilled workers" category between 1996 and 2000 represented 16.5% of the new immigrant population.

Skilled workers immigrate to Canada with exceptionally high levels of post-secondary education. Chart 1 shows the level of schooling achieved by persons applying to immigrate as skilled workers. Almost fifty percent of applicants had completed a bachelor's level degree (49.5%), 18.7% had a master's degree, and 4.7% had a doctorate. Additionally, 9 percent of skilled worker applicants had completed a non-university diploma, and 7.4% had a trade certificate.

Chart 1: The Level of Schooling Achieved by Persons Applying to Immigrate as Skilled Workers



Despite high levels of education and an eagerness to work, internationally-trained professionals and trades people experience a range of barriers to employment in Canada. One of the barriers most often appearing in related literature involves licensing and accreditation processes (Caledon Institute of Social Policy, 2002).

For those professionals requiring a license to work in their field, requirements vary by profession and by province. Provincial licensing bodies and professional associations have no consistent system for assessment across occupations and by regulatory bodies, which makes the licensing process difficult, time consuming and expensive. Bridging programs are often nonexistent or access is limited, and information about bridging, training and upgrading programs is not easily accessible for the internationally-trained and/or employment service providers.

Professionals, in fields not requiring a license, face similar barriers when attempting to connect with the Canadian labour market. According to the Caledon Institute (2002), nonrecognition of foreign training, education and work experience has a direct impact on access to employment that is consistent with the skills, knowledge and experience an individual offers.

When an internationally-trained worker's qualifications are not appropriately assessed or recognized, there are implications for both individuals and communities. According to a 2001 study entitled Assessing and Recognizing Foreign Credentials in Canada - Employer's Views, "the full productive potential of the labour force goes unrealized, and the affected individuals and their families suffer lower incomes and standards of living".

To put these impacts in perspective, the Conference Board of Canada (2001) suggests that more than half a million Canadians could increase their annual incomes by twelve thousand dollars if systems were in place to assess their skills and knowledge in a formal way. According to the Conference Board of Canada, losses resulting from nonrecognition of foreign qualifications are estimated to cost the Canadian economy about $15 billion a year due to unutilized skills.

The Conference Board of Canada (2001) describes the current system of learning recognition in Canada as "a patchwork of systems and methods based on ten provincial silos, each of which has it's own post-secondary education systems". With no standards set at federal and provincial levels, local employers have no way to understand foreign qualifications in the context of their workplace. During a study of Hamilton employers conducted by Settlement and Integration Services of Hamilton (2001), employers were asked what they perceived to be barriers to employment for internationally-trained professionals and trades people. Local

employers identified "no recognition of previous education/work experience" (32%) and "lack of Canadian license/certificate" (30%).
Another barrier to employment often identified in the literature is the lack of accurate and up-to-date employment related information prior to arriving in Canada (Sparks & Wolfson, 2002; Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, 2002). Specific topics of information include education and training programs, Canadian and local labour market, licensing processes and requirements, and the challenge of finding work in Canada.

A striking example of how a lack of information represents a barrier to employment is presented in a local report entitled *With an Open Door* (Hamilton-Wentworth Training and Advisory Board, 2002). During interviews with thirty-three internationally-trained nurses, twenty-one or sixty-four percent had no knowledge of the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO), the provincial licensing body. These findings suggest that some skilled workers arrive in Canada without even a basic understanding of the systems that govern their ability to practice their profession.

Other barriers to employment identified by internationally-trained workers include language skills and discrimination based on a lack of Canadian work experience (jobStart & Skills for Change, 2001). In terms of Canadian work experience, internationally-trained workers face the same obstacle as young Canadians entering the labour force for the first time. They face the "experience trap", where an individual cannot get work because they do not have experience, but cannot get experience without work. The reality is however, that internationally-trained workers often have years of experience in their country of origin, which is often not given the same consideration.

The impact of employment barriers faced by internationally-trained workers in Canada can be quite significant to individuals, families, and communities. Unable to break into their field, many newcomers are forced to take "survival jobs" (Sparks & Wolfson, 2001). These jobs are generally not related to the individual's field, and are often low-paying. Becoming trapped in a cycle of survival jobs affects the financial stability and often the emotional/psychological stability of individuals and families.

Skilled workers in survival jobs were interviewed during a 2001 study entitled Settlement in the Workplace - The Settlement Needs of Employed Newcomers (Sparks & Wolfson). Those interviewed reported that they felt their technical skills begin to erode because they are not being used, and they are not gaining any useable skills or experience.

According to the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities (2002), sixty-percent (60%) of persons forced to take a survival job were employed in the same job after three years.

Many of the systems and strategies required to address issues and barriers facing internationally-trained professionals and trades people will require collaborative efforts involving federal and provincial governments, professional associations and licensing bodies, and educational institutions. There is, however, a lot that can be done at the community level to connect newcomers to employment in their field, while providing local employers with access to a pool of skilled workers. Community-based employment services and supports are essential to the successful integration of internationally-trained workers into the labour force.

In Hamilton, while there are currently a range of employment services available to newcomers, there is a growing sense that many local services are not designed to address the unique employment support needs of newcomers. There is also the issue of growing demand for services.

A report commissioned by Hamilton's Economic Development Department (HR Matters, 2002) examined employment trends in Hamilton related to an aging population. With an anticipated shortage of skilled workers over the next several decades, the city is developing a long-term human resource strategy. Part of this strategy involves attracting more skilled immigrants to Hamilton, and strengthening Hamilton's resettlement capacity. This report should be of value to the city's planning process, as it identifies existing gaps in Hamilton's employment services sector, as it relates to internationally-trained professionals and trades people.

3.2 Best Practices in Addressing Employment Barriers

As indicated in the background section of this report, internationally-trained professionals and trades people new to Canada face a range of barriers to securing employment in their field. Many of these barriers are well documented in the literature, and are supported by findings from this study.

Also prevalent in the literature are strategies or approaches to address employment barriers through the appropriate provision of community-level employment supports and services. Again, many of these strategies were echoed by the key stakeholders consulted during the study.

In a study entitled Best Settlement Practices - Settlement Services for Refugees and Immigrants in Canada (1998), the Canadian Council for Refugees establishes a set of "best practices guidelines". These guidelines are based on a set of twelve core values that, if considered in the development and provision of community-based services, will result in best practices at the local level. The term "best practices" in this sense represents an ideal to which an organization can strive.

Following are the twelve core values that constitute best practices guidelines (Canadian Council for Refugees, 1998):

1. Services are accessible to all who need them.
2. Services are offered in an inclusive manner, respectful of, and sensitive to, diversity.
3. Clients are empowered by services.
4. Services respond to needs as identified by users.
5. Services take account of the complex, multifaceted, interrelated dimensions of settlement and integration.
6. Services are delivered in a manner that fully respects the rights and dignity of the individual.
7. Services are delivered in a manner that is culturally sensitive.
8. Services promote the development of newcomer communities and newcomer participation in the wider community, and develop communities that are welcoming of newcomers.
9. Services are delivered in the spirit of collaboration.
10. Service delivery is made accountable to the communities served.
11. Services are oriented towards promoting positive change in the lives of newcomers, and in the capacity of society to offer equality of opportunity for all, and
12. Services are based on reliable and up-to-date information.

This section of the report focuses on community level services and supports to address identified and documented employment barriers faced by internationally-trained professionals and trades people, as well as strategies to bridge the gap between skilled workers and local employers. Specific service types will be described in terms of best practices by incorporating the core values identified by the Canadian Council for Refugees. While programs and services should strive to incorporate all of the core values identified above, some are more critical than others to specific service types.

Section 5.0 of this report will assess Hamilton's employment service sector in terms of the delivery of specific service types.

3.2.1 Providing Information

Access to accurate and up-to-date information on the Canadian and local labour market, licensing and accreditation processes, and existing support services and programs is key to the successful integration of internationally-trained professionals and trades people into the Canadian labour force (Sparks & Wolfson, 2002).

According to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (2002), many internationally-trained professionals and trades people arrive in Canada with little information on the challenges and approaches to finding employment in their field. This information then, must be provided through community-based services.

The core values associated with best practices identified by the Canadian Council for Refugees (1998) should also be considered in the provision of information services. Specifically, information services should be accessible, and information should be reliable and up-to-date. Services should also be provided "in the spirit of collaboration", with strong connections to local employers and regulatory bodies.

3.2.2 Job-Search Supports

Job-search supports include such components as resume preparation, developing interview skills, targeted job-search and self-marketing. These types of supports are crucial in developing the skills and knowledge required to connect with the Canadian labour market (jobStart & Skills for Change, 2001).

As a component of job-search supports, self-marketing figures prominently in the New Canadian Program (NCP) in Waterloo, as well as Skills for Change and the Centre for Foreign-Trained Professionals and Trades people in Toronto. Essentially, self-marketing programs help newcomers to identify and approach relevant employers and showcase their skills and experience.

Consistent with the core values of best practices, self-marketing programs are empowering for newcomers. Armed with knowledge and self-marketing tools, clients are able to independently network with employers.

3.2.3 Credential Assessment

According to the Caledon Institute (2002), nonrecognition of foreign credentials has a direct impact on access to employment that is consistent with the skills, knowledge and experience of the individual. By not accurately assessing foreign

credentials the full potential of the labour market remains untapped, and individuals and families often receive lower incomes and suffer lower standards of living. While there is little in the way of standards and processes for accreditation through professional associations and educational institutions, education assessment services are provided through four centres in Ontario. These centres include York University, the University of Toronto, International Credential Assessment Services (ICAS) in Guelph, and World Education Services (WES) in Toronto. These services come at a cost to the client.

With respect to core values, it is important that there be a strong connection to local employers. Employers must understand and value credential assessments if they are to be of benefit to internationally-trained professionals and trades people.

3.2.4 English Language Training

Developing a command of English is considered a critical factor contributing to economic independence and to participation in the broader society (Citizen and Immigration Canada, 1998). Beyond day-to-day language needs, internationally-trained professionals and trades people also need to be skilled in reading, writing, and speaking the language of their chosen field (Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, 2002).

Consistent with the core values of best practices, English language components must be accessible and relevant to clients. In developing sector-specific language training, partnerships should be made between service providers and local employers to ensure that courses or training materials are relevant to local workplaces.

3.2.5 Volunteer, Mentoring and Work Placement Opportunities

Volunteer, mentoring and work placements provide internationally-trained professionals and trades people with opportunities for exposure to the Canadian or sector-specific work culture, and make connections with local employers. A study by Volunteer Canada (2002) revealed that about 30% of new immigrants considered volunteering a means to improving their job opportunities.

In terms of core values, a volunteer, mentoring and/or work placement program needs to provide opportunities that are relevant to the client. Close partnerships with employers should be developed and employers offering work experience opportunities should be educated around the sometimes unique needs of

internationally-trained workers. Community-based organizations could support local employers in developing policies to promote diversity in the work place.

3.2.6 Maintaining a Searchable Database

Ideally, a searchable database would provide two key benefits to the community. It would help to connect internationally-trained professionals and trades people with local employers, and provide employers access to a pool of skilled workers.

In terms of core values, a database should be accessible and up-to-date. To enhance the capacity and benefits of a database it should be connected, where possible, to similar databases in other jurisdictions. These types of databases are currently accessible through the New Canadians Program in Kitchener-Waterloo, Skills for Change (SfC) in Toronto, and the Centre for Foreign-Trained Professionals and Trades People in Toronto.

4.0 PROFILES AND RESPONSES FROM KEY STAKEHOLDER SURVEYS

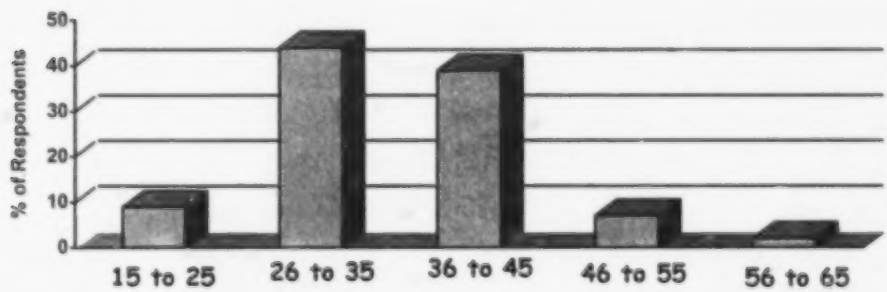
This section of the report provides an overview of findings from surveys distributed to internationally-trained professionals and trades-people, local employers and local service providers. A profile of each group is followed by a summary of survey responses (see APPENDIX D - Stakeholder Surveys).

Survey findings from each of the stakeholder groups provided the foundation for further consultations, including focus groups and key-informant interviews. These findings are incorporated into chapter 6.0, which examines existing local employment programs and services for internationally-trained professionals and trades people.

4.1 Internationally-Trained Professionals and Trades People

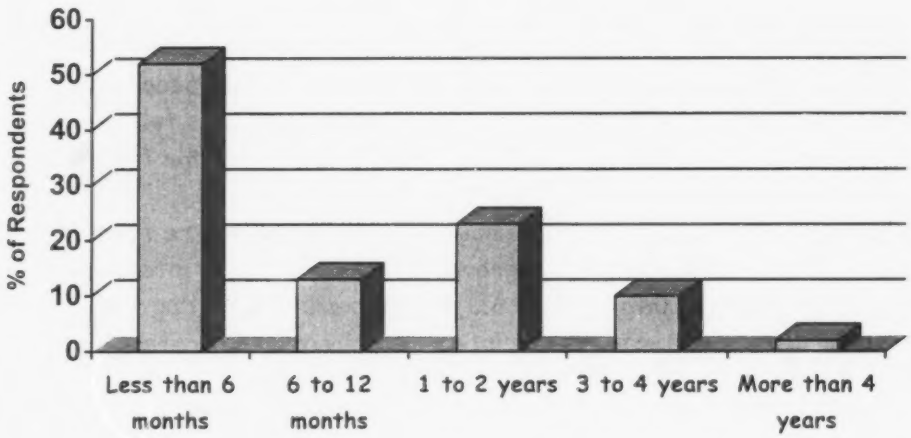
In total, fifty-nine (59) internationally-trained professionals were surveyed during phase one of the consultation process. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of those surveyed were male, with thirty-three percent (33%) females. Chart 2 shows the age distribution of survey respondents. The vast majority of respondents fell into the 26 to 35 year age group (44%) and the 36 to 45 year age group (39%).

Chart 2: Age Distribution of Survey Respondents - Internationally-trained Professional and Trades People



Survey respondents were asked how long they had been in Canada. While responses varied, the majority of respondents reported being in the country less than six months (52%). Chart 3 shows the distribution of responses.

Chart 3: Length of Time in Canada



With respect to employment status, eighty-six percent (86%) of respondents were unemployed. One individual was involved in temporary or contract work, two part-time in their field, three part-time not in their field, and two full-time not in their field. Respondents also reported a range of career fields, primarily in engineering, health care, business or accounting, and education.

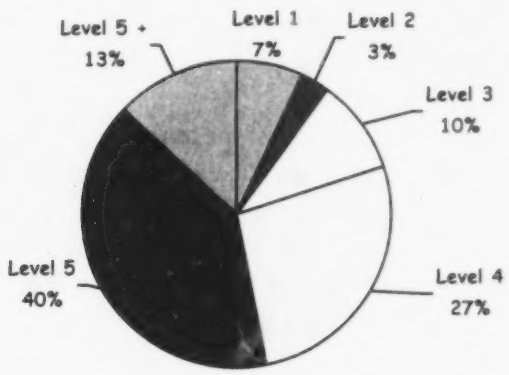
In terms of English language skills, thirty-five percent (35%) of respondents were enrolled in an English language program at the time of the survey. Just over half (51%) of respondents reported having had their English skills assessed. Their level of English language proficiency was assessed based on Language Assessment for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) criteria, and categorized as a level from 1 to 5. Table 3 describes the criteria required for each of the five LINC levels.

Table 3: Criteria for LINC Levels 1 through 5

LINC Level	LINC Level Criteria
Level 1	The person can follow and respond to simple greetings and instructions. Functions minimally in reading and writing.
Level 2	The person can follow and respond to questions with little control of grammar. Can recognize familiar words and has some competence in writing.
Level 3	Adequate competence in basic oral communication. Can perform simple reading and writing tasks with some competence.
Level 4	Oral communication is reasonably fluent. Can read and write paragraphs and fill in forms. Has control of grammar and spelling.
Level 5	Understands and uses a wide range of vocabulary and sentence structures. Able to read text and write short letters or reports.

Chart 4 shows the LINC levels of those respondents. The majority, (53%) or respondents reported a LINC level of 5 or higher, while 27% reported a LINC level of 4. Twenty percent (20%) of respondents reported LINC levels of 3 or less.

CHART 4: LINC Levels of Respondents Who Had Their English Language Skills Assessed



When asked if they felt that English language skills represented a barrier to employment, thirty-nine percent (39%) of respondents answered "yes". Respondents were then asked for input on better approaches to language training. The approaches most often suggested were the need for more sector-specific language training, and more consistency in the provision of English language programs locally.

The survey of internationally-trained professionals and trades people also focused on Canadian work experience. Of those surveyed, eighty-eight (88%) percent reported having no Canadian experience. When asked if they perceived a lack of Canadian experience as a barrier to employment, eighty-four (84%) percent felt that it was.

As a means to gaining Canadian work experience, eighty-five percent (85%) of respondents said they would consider volunteer opportunities. When asked what types of community programs would support internationally-trained professionals and trades people to gain Canadian work experience, respondents identified co-op or job placements, part-time employment and volunteer opportunities.

In order to establish what types of programs and services that internationally-trained professionals and trades people felt they needed, respondents were asked to identify "the best supports for newcomers in finding employment". The types of supports most often identified included better information on the local labour market and local employers, language programs related to their field, job-search training and, programs that connect individuals to employers.

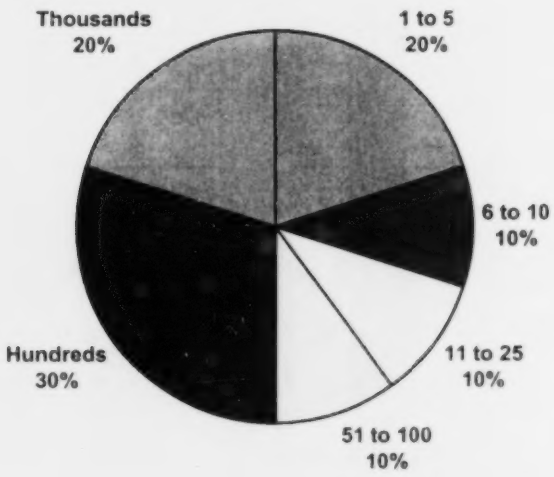
4.2 Local Employers

A total of eleven (11) local employers were surveyed during the first phase of the consultation process. Although this is a relatively small sample size, both the types of industry and size of companies represented covers a wide range.

When asked what type of company they represent, respondents identified the following: health care, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, marketing, real estate, retail, steel fabrication, agriculture and waste management.

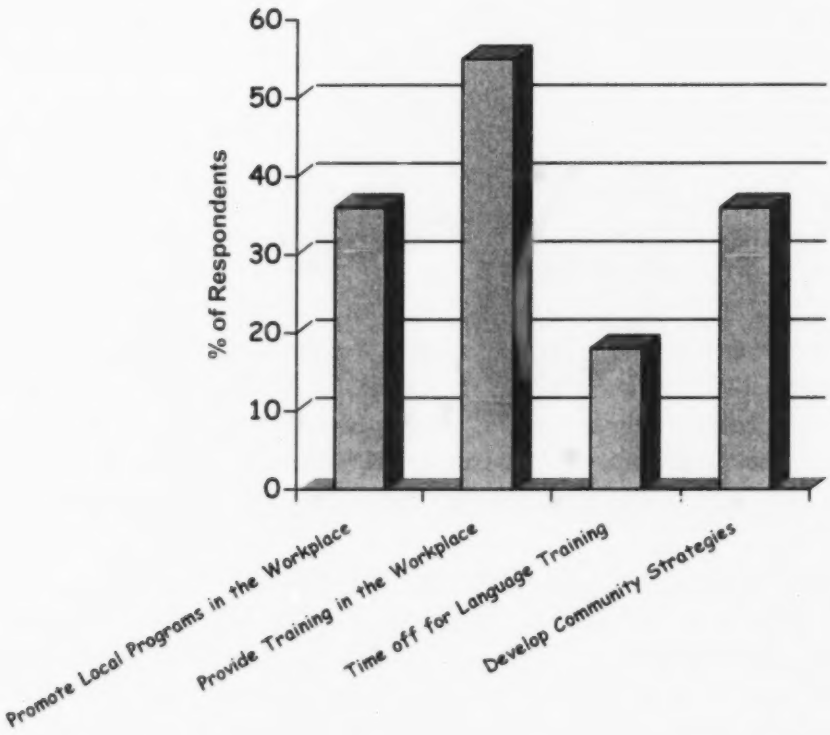
In terms of company size, employers were asked to identify the number of employees. Chart 5 shows the range of company size. Again, while sample size is small, responses cover a wide range.

Chart 5: Local Employer Survey - Number of Employees



With respect to improving language skills, employers were given a range of strategies and asked which ones they would support or promote in their workplace. CHART 4 shows the distribution of responses from employers. Providing training in the workplace was the strategy most often supported (55%). Thirty-six percent (36%) of respondents expressed a willingness to provide information on local language training programs in the workplace, and eighteen percent (18%) supported time-off for employees requiring language training. Thirty-six percent (36%) of employers surveyed said that they would support the development of broad community strategies to address language skills as a barrier to employment.

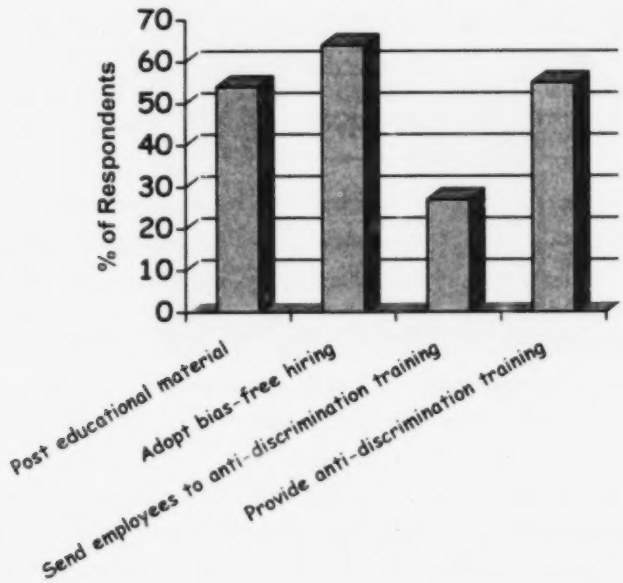
CHART 6: Strategies to Address English Language Skills as a Barrier to Employment



Canadian work experience is often cited by both job seekers and employers as a barrier to employment. The survey of employers also focused on Canadian work experience, and how local employers might help to overcome this barrier to employment. Fifty-four percent (54%) of respondents reported that they would provide volunteer or co-op placement opportunities. Twenty-seven percent (27%) of respondents said that they would provide transitional training and workplace integration programs.

In efforts to address the issue of discriminatory hiring practices, which can often be subtle or systemic, employers were asked what policies they would be willing to implement. As shown in CHART 7, sixty-four percent (64%) of respondents said they would be willing to adopt a bias-free hiring practice, fifty-five (55%) said they would post educational material, twenty-seven percent (27%) would send employees to anti-discrimination training and, fifty-five percent (55%) said they would be willing to provide anti-discrimination training to their employees.

CHART 7: Employer-Supported Strategies to Address Discriminatory Hiring Practices



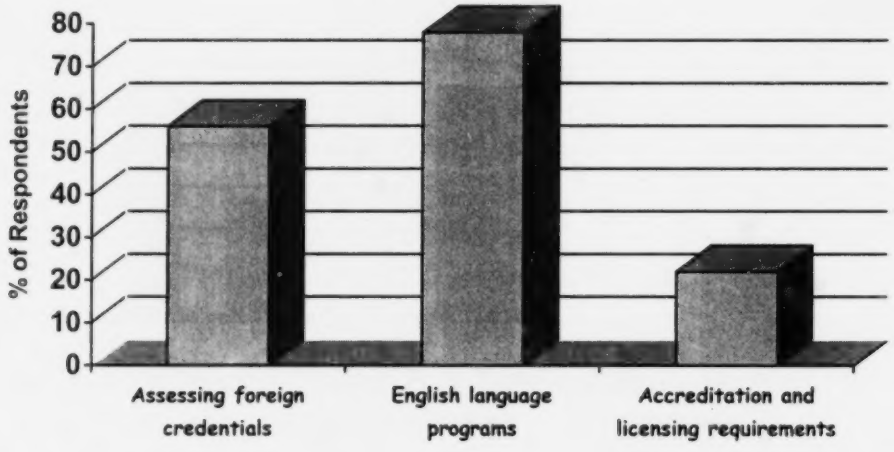
As a final survey question, employers were asked what else local employment services could do to connect internationally-trained professionals to the labour market. Responses included "training in North American work culture, and "soft-skills" training. When asked if they would be willing to work directly with a local employment service agency to develop a job-readiness program for internationally-trained professionals and trades people, ninety-one percent (91%) said they would.

4.3 Local Employment Service Providers

Nine local employment service providers responded to surveys during the first phase of the consultation process. Respondents represented a range of service types, with a mix of specialized and mainstream services.

Service providers were asked specific information most relevant to internationally-trained professionals and trades people. As shown in CHART 8, fifty-five percent (55%) of respondents provided information on assessing foreign education, seventy-eight percent (78%) provided information on English language training opportunities and, twenty-two percent (22%) provided information on accreditation and licensing requirements.

CHART 8: Information Provided Through Local Employment Services



Newcomers to Canada may have a range of issues related to arriving in a new country which may affect their ability to find adequate employment. Service providers were asked if their agency provided direct support, information or make referrals for clients with settlement issues. Forty-four percent (44%) of respondents reported providing direct service, seventy-eight percent (78%) provide information, and seventy-eight percent (78%) make referrals to other community service agencies.

When asked "which local agencies do you generally refer internationally-trained professionals and trades people", respondents most often cited SISO (100%), St. Joseph's Immigrant Women's Centre (44%), St. Charles Adult Learning Centre (44%), and Mohawk College (33%).

As a final survey question, respondents were asked "As a local employment service provider, do you see value in developing a resource centre for internationally-trained professionals and trades people?". Eighty-eight percent (88%) of respondents answered "Yes".

5.0 SERVICE DELIVERY MODELS

This section of the report considers how employment services are provided at a community level, and how clients connect with the most appropriate services that address their individual support needs. In efforts to understand the respective benefits and drawbacks of alternative service delivery models, we compare Hamilton with the neighbouring region of Kitchener-Waterloo.

The region of Kitchener-Waterloo was selected for comparison because of recently initiated service delivery component. In December 2002, with funding through the Kitchener Human Resource Centre of Canada, the YMCA launched the Employment Assistance Services (EAS). For newcomers, this service provides centralized assessment of employment service needs, and referrals to the most appropriate local services. This model of service delivery will be discussed in detail later in this section.

Hamilton currently maintains a fragmented approach to delivering employment services. While a range of services and service types are provided locally, there is no formal coordination of services. Informal networks of local service providers have evolved out of necessity, where service providers share information on programs and services, and develop informal referral networks. These networks however, fall short of maximizing the impact of the local employment services sector.

A lack of coordination of employment services has implications for internationally-trained professionals and trades people seeking support. Newcomers often have unique service needs that, according to local service providers surveyed, are not always adequately addressed through "mainstream" agencies. Similarly, clients accessing specialized services for newcomers may be better served through mainstream agencies.

An internationally-trained worker, for example, may enroll in a job-search training program that assumes a certain level of understanding of the local labour market, work culture and English language skills. Having not met their needs, the client may become discouraged from accessing employment services, or repeat job-search training through another agency.

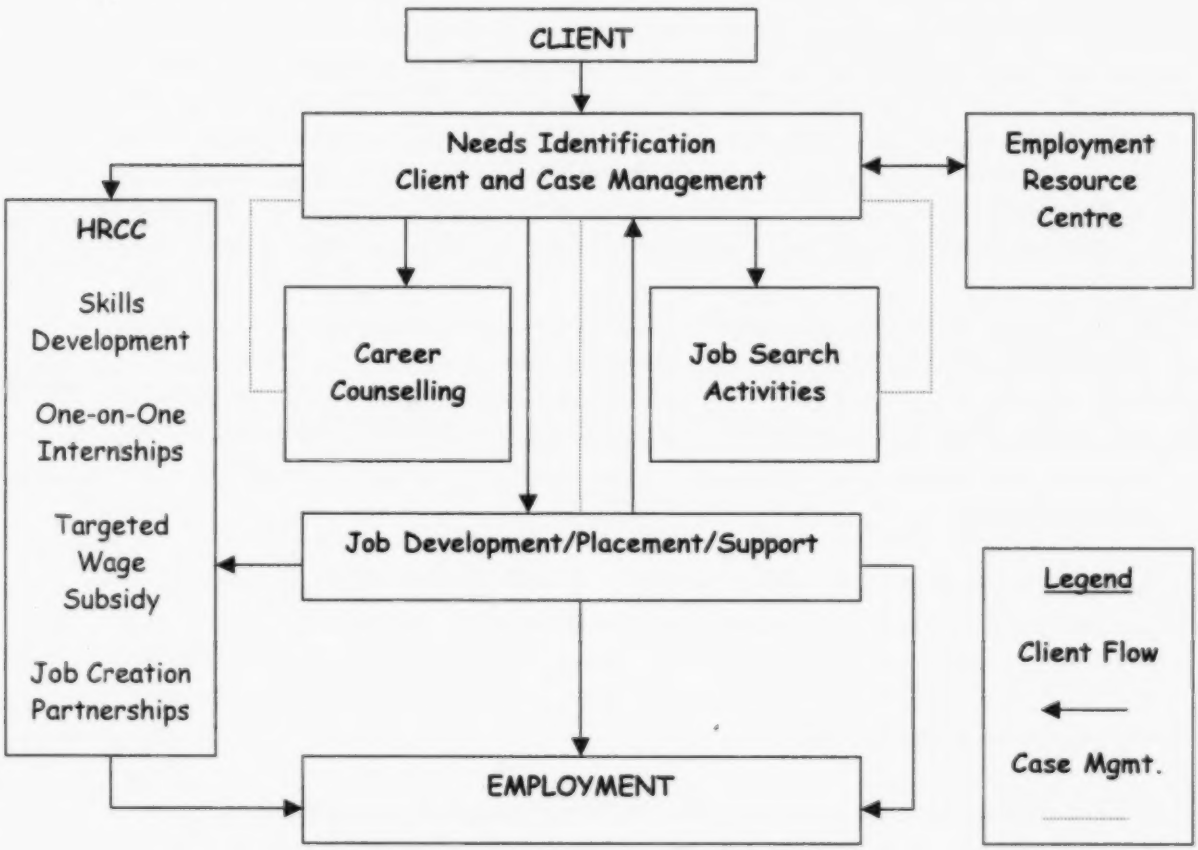
For the internationally-trained worker attempting to connect with the local labour market, the current service system may result in frustration and a substantial investment of time. Similarly, employment service providers may spend valuable resources providing services that do not meet the unique needs of the client.

Following is an overview of the Kitchener-Waterloo Employment Assistance Services. Information on the service and its impacts was collected through key informant interviews and a formal presentation to the project advisory committee by the program's staff.

5.1 The Kitchener-Waterloo Employment Assistance Services

In operation since December 2002 (seven months) the Kitchener-Waterloo Employment Assistance Services (EAS) provides a level of coordination to a previously fragmented employment service sector similar to Hamilton. As shown in CHART 9, the EAS is the initial point of contact for clients accessing local employment services. If a client approaches a local service directly, they will be directed to the EAS for assessment and referral.

CHART 9: The Kitchener-Waterloo EAS Service Delivery Model



EAS staff assist clients in the identification of employment needs and the development of a Return to Work Action Plan (RTWAP). Based on a comprehensive assessment of individual client needs, an RTWAP directs the client to the most appropriate local services.

Using a case management approach, EAS staff liaise with local service providers to coordinate the client's action plan and monitor the client's progress. EAS staff support the client as they progress through their RTWAP, addressing any problems or concerns that may occur. When a client completes a specific employment program, they return to the EAS for an assessment of further service needs. According to EAS staff, clients generally require more that one intervention/referral. Case management software, *Contact IV*, is used to track a client's service usage.

Once a client's RTWAP is completed, EAS staff determine his or her employment status. If a client's RTWAP is closed as "not employed", EAS staff follow-up after 12 weeks to reassess employment status. This mechanism allows both the EAS and local service providers to measure successful outcomes of their programs and services.

In addition to assessment and referral functions, the EAS maintains an Employment Resource Centre. The centre provides employment and labour market information relevant to newcomers, and offers a supportive self-service alternative.

This model requires strong connections between the EAS and local employment service providers, for the purposes of monitoring client progress and identifying the most appropriate services for specific clients. EAS staff must maintain an in-depth understanding of specific program and service requirements, and what types of clients benefit most from a particular service. This ensures that EAS staff provide the most effective referrals based on an assessment of client needs.

There are three key benefits of this service delivery model over a fragmented approach. First, by tracking client progress through a case management approach, the EAS model provides accurate and reliable data on both the success of and demand for specific services and service types. This will ultimately create a feedback loop, informing the local employment service system of its strengths and needs for change in service delivery.

Second, this model ensures that clients are connected with local services that would best meet their needs. By reducing or eliminating "bad fits" between clients and services, this model provides a cost savings to both clients and service providers, in terms of time and resources.

A third benefit of the EAS model over a fragmented approach is a reduction in administration required of service providers. Clients arrive at a local agency based on assessed needs. This eliminates the need for service providers to conduct internal assessment of clients. Client data is also managed by the EAS, and is no longer collected by individual agencies.

In terms of drawbacks associated with this model, only HRCC funded programs and services require a referral from the EAS. While this includes approximately twenty local programs, it means that the local employment service system is only partly coordinated. Other local employment services and, ultimately potential clients then, do not benefit from this coordinated model.

6.0 EMPLOYMENT SERVICES IN HAMILTON

This section will consider how the programs and services identified as best practices in section 3.0 are provided in Hamilton. These programs and services include providing information, job-search supports, support for credential assessment, English language training, volunteer, mentoring and work placement opportunities, and maintaining a searchable database.

Although an evaluation of specific programs and services is beyond the scope of this study, we will consider how each of the above mentioned services are provided through the existing service delivery model described in section 5.0. Gaps in service will also be identified and documented, with support from related literature, as well as survey, focus group and key informant interview findings.

Surveys were conducted with local employers, service providers and internationally-trained professionals and trades people. Two focus groups were held with internationally-trained professionals and trades people not employed in their field. Key informant interviews were conducted with local employers, service providers, unions and professional associations and internationally-trained professionals and trades people employed in their field of study.

6.1 Providing Information

Many local employment service providers provide information on the local labour market, academic assessment processes and local educational and training opportunities. Indications from consultations with key stakeholders however, suggest that this information is not always complete or up-to-date from agency to agency.

The survey of local service providers revealed that, while all agencies surveyed provided some information relevant and important to internationally-trained professionals and trades people, only fifty-five percent (55%) provided information on assessing foreign education, seventy-eight percent (78%) on English language training opportunities, and only twenty-two percent (22%) provided information on accreditation requirements of professional associations and trade unions for internationally-trained persons.

Despite the fact that most internationally-trained professionals and trades people come from occupations which are regulated in Ontario, information and assistance regarding the licensing process with regulatory bodies is provided only at an empirical level, with no resources allocated locally for this service.

Indications from consultations with key stakeholders suggest that many times service providers and employers are confused between the process of academic assessment and the process of licensing. Moreover, there are currently over forty regulatory bodies in Ontario alone, each with its own process and requirements for licensing.

Consultations with local service providers showed support for a "one-stop information centre", which would maintain up-to-date information on ever changing programs, services and licensing requirements. One service provider suggested the need for a specialized information service for internationally-trained professionals and trades people, stating that "information on professional and skilled trades requalification for internationally-trained workers is often difficult to find and interpret".

> *"Information on professional and skilled trades requalification for internationally-trained workers is often difficult to find and interpret".*
>
> *Quote from a local service provider*

Internationally-trained professionals and trades people surveyed and interviewed during the study suggested the need for more computer-based information and resources. They also identified however, that local services currently offer limited access to computer terminals. Information should also be accessible in languages other than English, to accommodate those individuals with language barriers.

Both local service providers and internationally-trained professionals and trades people emphasized the need for information that is relevant to local employers. In fact, when local employers were asked if they would be willing to work with a local employment agency to develop an employment readiness program for internationally-trained professionals and trades people, ninety-one percent (91%) of respondents said they would.

6.2 Job-Search Supports

Job-search training is also provided through a number of local employment service agencies in Hamilton. Findings from key informant interviews with local service providers suggest that training programs are not always culturally sensitive and do not always consider the unique circumstances of internationally-

> *"I was told by one agency to take all of my foreign work experience off my resume, because it would hurt my chance for an interview".*
>
> *Quote from a internationally-trained worker*

trained professionals and trades people. One internationally-trained professional in a focus group recounted " I was told by one agency to take all of my foreign work experience off my resume, because it would hurt my chance for an interview".

During key informant interviews with both local employers and service providers, participants emphasized the need for self-marketing skills. Internationally-trained professionals and trades people interviewed and surveyed suggest the need for local employer input in to job-search programs. Again, when local employers were asked if they would be willing to work with a local employment agency to develop an employment readiness program for internationally-trained professionals and trades people, ninety-one percent (91%) of respondents said they would.

Currently in Hamilton, local agencies providing job-search programs specifically for newcomers report a much higher demand for their programs than resources allow. For example, both SISO and St Joseph Immigrant Women's Centre reported serving between 150 to 250 more clients annually than they receive funding for.

6.3 Credential Assessment

SISO currently offers support to newcomers applying for education assessment services, which are provided through four centres in Ontario. These centres include York University, the University of Toronto, International Credential Assessment Services (ICAS) in Guelph, and World Education Services (WES) in Toronto. Credential assessment is provided at a cost to the individual.

Credential assessment however, is only valuable if employers perceive it as credible. In a 2001 study conducted by SISO, thirty-two percent of employers surveyed identified "no recognition of previous education and work experience" as a barrier to employment for internationally-trained workers. A service provider interviewed during this study felt the "employers don't have enough confidence in internationally-trained professionals...find a way to make them believe in people who are trained outside the country".

> *"Employers don't have enough confidence in internationally-trained professionals...find a way to make them believe in people who are trained outside the country".*
>
> *Quote from a local service provider*

There is a need to promote the value and reliability of credential assessment among

employers, to increase their likelihood of accepting a credential assessment and valuing work experience gained outside Canada. Currently in Hamilton there are no resources directed toward this function.

6.4 English Language Training

The majority of English language training is provided through the Hamilton Boards of Education, and through Mohawk College in Hamilton.

Internationally-trained professionals and trades people, through surveys, focus groups and key informant interviews, indicated that local English language training opportunities did not meet their needs. This group of newcomers generally arrives in Canada with relatively high levels of English language skills. While ESL programs are general and accommodate students with a range of language skills, internationally-trained professionals and trades people identify the need for sector specific language training and language related to work culture in Canada.

> *"I would expect that they are able to communicate at a reasonable level...difficulties come with the technical part of the language".*
>
> *Quote from a local employer*

As one key informant suggested, "I see a professional class that is specific to professional terminology, and I see a general vocabulary based ESL class that is for people who are only interested in learning the English language". Local employers also expressed the need for sector specific language training.

When asked "what are your expectations in terms of English language and communication skills of foreign trained workers?", one local employer responded - "I would expect that they are able to communicate at a reasonable level...difficulties come with the technical part of the language".

The Sector-Specific Orientation, Terminology, Information and Counselling (STIC) program was developed locally through a partnership with SISO and Mohawk College. While the program was shown to be effective, funding for the program was short-term and programs were developed only for accounting, engineering and health-care fields. At this time the program has been terminated.

6.5 Volunteer, Mentoring and Work Placement Opportunities

In a 2001 study conducted by SISO, twenty-two percent (22%) of employers identified a "demand for Canadian experience" as a barrier to employment for internationally-trained professionals and trades people. The survey of internationally-trained professionals and trades people also focused on Canadian work experience. Of those surveyed, eighty-eight (88%) percent reported having no Canadian experience. When asked if they perceived a lack of Canadian experience as a barrier to employment, eighty-four (84%) percent felt that it was.

> *"we need to connect job seekers with employers and workplaces, with a mentor or as a volunteer"*
>
> *Quote from a local service provider*

As a means to gaining Canadian work experience, eighty-five percent (85%) of respondents said they would consider volunteer opportunities. When asked what types of community programs would support internationally-trained professionals and trades people to gain Canadian work experience, respondents identified co-op or job placements, part-time employment and volunteer opportunities.

During focus groups however, participants identified barriers to volunteering, including cost and time. In addition, any opportunities to connect to the local labour force should be relevant to the individual's field.

As one local service provider suggested, "we need to connect job seekers with employers and workplaces, with a mentor or as a volunteer". Local employers surveyed were prepared to contribute to the development of mentoring, volunteer and work placement strategies, and the majority (54%) would offer these opportunities in their workplace.

SISO currently provides a mentoring program that matches newcomers with professionals and trades people employed in their field, but the capacity of the program is limited by funding constraints. Currently there are one-hundred and fifty-five (155) newcomers and seventy-two (72) mentors registered with the program, which is staffed by one facilitator.

6.6 Maintain a Searchable Database

The need for a database that matches internationally-trained professionals and trades people with employers was expressed through interviews with both employers and internationally-trained workers. During an interview with an internationally-trained professional employed in his field, the interviewee was asked "what supports were missing that would have been helpful [when you were seeking

employment]?" The response was "a database of employers on the internet...something that internationally-trained professionals could send resumes through".

Currently, in Hamilton, SISO supports a database to match local employers with internationally-trained professionals and trades people. The database requires considerable development however, and ongoing maintenance.

> *"A database of employers on the internet...something that internationally-trained professionals could send resumes through".*
>
> *Quote from a internationally-trained professional*

The literature on best practices suggests the need for partnerships with agencies maintaining databases in other jurisdictions, to increase the potential of matching internationally-trained professionals and trades people with opportunities in their field. This strategy was echoed by local employers associated with the project, who also wished to increase the accessible pool of potential employees. These types of databases are currently accessible through the New Canadians Program in Kitchener-Waterloo, Skills for Change (SfC) in Toronto, and the Centre for Foreign-Trained Professionals and Trades People in Toronto.

7.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on a synthesis of findings from each of the research methods employed. This includes a review of related literature, surveys of key stakeholders including local employers, service providers and internationally-trained professionals and trades people, focus groups and key informant interviews with key stakeholders, and presentations from employment service providers in other jurisdictions.

As described in the literature review, Hamilton's Economic Development Department is preparing a long-term human resource strategy. Part of this strategy involves attracting more skilled immigrants to Hamilton, and strengthening Hamilton's resettlement capacity. Recommendations from this report should be of value to the city's planning process, as they address gaps in employment services designed to support internationally-trained professionals and trades people.

It is clear from the analysis of service delivery models that Hamilton's fragmented approach is lacking in both effectiveness and efficiency. Without a central assessment and referral component, clients may connect with local service and access local programs that may not be the "right fit". This may result in a drain on time and resources of both the client and the service provider, and a general frustration with the local employment service system.

The benefits of a coordinated system of accessing service are clear, and in the interests of clients, service providers, local employers and funders. Clients benefit from a clear plan of action that is based on their assessed needs. Service providers benefit from a reduction in the administration and evaluation of their programs and services, and are assured that their clients are a good fit with the services they provide. Employers benefit from one-stop access to a pool of available skilled workers and, funders benefit in that clients will not be accessing programs that may not be the right fit.

Given the benefits of a coordinated system of assessment and referral, we put forth the following recommendation:

Recommendation 1

- ***That Hamilton develop a central assessment and referral service similar to the Employment Assistance Services (EAS) in Kitchener-Waterloo***

Access to information that is relevant and important to internationally-trained professionals and trades people in Hamilton was a key theme throughout the study.

Specifically, information on the Canadian labour market, licensing and accreditation processes, and existing programs targeting the internationally-trained. While information is available through a number of local agencies, this information is not always consistent and up-to-date. Given the need for access to reliable and up-to date employment related information, we put forth the following recommendations:

Recommendation 2

- ***That a central information centre for internationally-trained professionals and trades people, local employment service providers and employers be developed in Hamilton, with adequate funding to maintain up-to-date information on the Canadian labour market, licensing and accreditation processes, and existing programs targeting newcomers.***

Recommendation 3

- ***That a central information centre has computer terminals available to internationally-trained professionals and trades people to access on-line information.***

With respect to English language skills, both the literature and input from consultations with key stakeholders identified the need for sector specific language training. This was identified by all key stakeholder groups, including local employers, service providers, and internationally-trained professionals and trades people.

Although the Sector Terminology Information & Counselling (STIC) program piloted in Hamilton was shown to be effective, funding was limited and only three sectors were served. Given the need for sector specific language training and success with the STIC pilot project, we put forth the recommendation:

Recommendation 4

That the language training component of the STIC program be reactivated in Hamilton, and expanded to include other sectors relevant to the Hamilton labour market.

The development and provision of the remaining four core services identified as best practices (i.e. job search supports, credential assessment, volunteer, mentoring and work placement opportunities and, maintaining a searchable database) all require a strong connection to local employers.

As identified in the literature and through consultations with key stakeholders, it is important to have employer input in the ongoing development of job search supports, so that training is relevant and meets the expectations of local employers. In fact, findings from the survey of local employers showed that 91% of those surveyed were willing to work with a local agency to develop a job readiness program for internationally-trained workers.

While credential assessment is currently available to internationally-trained workers in Hamilton, the research suggests that employers require education on the assessment process and its validity. This will require extensive outreach among local employers.

Providing or facilitating volunteer, mentoring and work placement opportunities requires an obvious connection to local employers. While 54% of employers surveyed expressed a willingness to provide volunteer and mentoring opportunities, the process of identifying and negotiating local opportunities and matching internationally-trained clients is labour intensive.

With respect to developing and maintaining a searchable database, it is important that employer data and employment opportunities be accurate and up-to-date. This would require ongoing, open and responsive line of communication between the service provider and local employers. As suggested by local employers, it would also be valuable to connect a local database with similar databases in other jurisdictions. This would benefit both employers and job seekers by increasing their respective pools of employers/employees.

It seems a natural fit to have one organization provide all of these services. Where employer input and/or participation is required for each of these services, one point of contact would eliminate any confusion on the part of employers. Making participation simple and effective will also increase the likelihood of participation by employers in the various programs. It would also cut down on the number of individuals/agencies contacting employers on a regular basis. Given the importance of employer involvement we put forth the following recommendations:

Recommendation 5
That one Hamilton agency be identified as the liaison with local employers for the purposes of negotiating volunteer, mentoring and work placement opportunities, promoting the value of credential assessment, updating a searchable database and soliciting input on job-search supports for internationally-trained professionals and trades people.

Recommendation 6

That a searchable database for internationally-trained professionals and employers be developed and linked to databases in other jurisdictions, to maximize the value for both employers and job seekers.

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APPENDIX A:
Record of Proceedings - SISO Consultation Meeting

Settlement and Integration Services Organization

SISO

Organisme pour les Services d'Intégration et d'Adaptation

Settlement & Integration Services Organization

THE CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONALLY TRAINED PROFESSIONALS AND TRADESPEOPLE

CONSULTATION MEETING

APRIL 25, 2002

SPONSORED BY: THE ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION

1. Background

During the last 4 years, while providing employment-related services to immigrants and refugees in the Hamilton region it has become increasingly apparent that although the community benefits from a large number of employment resources and services, they are not design to address the specific issues and barriers faced by newcomers to Canada.

The research of literature has revealed that ***that it takes on average "15.6 years to immigrants to adjust to the point where they share the same hazard of unemployment as non-immigrants".*** According to the same study, "age, education, Canadian work experience, occupation, location, marital status and family size all exert an influence. Immigrants who have no advantages over non-immigrants with respect to these factors require almost 24 years to adjust. Those with disadvantages, it can be surmised, will take even longer and may always be at a higher risk of unemployment." (Thomas & Rappak -Employment Stability and the Adjustment of Immigrants, 1998).

The impact of having thousands of unemployed and underemployed immigrant professionals and tradespeople is felt in families and in communities in the form of lost dreams and opportunities, and at all levels of government in the form of lost dollars and increased social assistance and social service costs (Mata: 1999; Reitz: 2000, Halli: 2000, Pendakur: 2000, Ornstein: 2000). One recent study which examined the inequalities between immigrants and non-immigrants on measures such as ***average earnings, occupation and hours of work, projects that if these inequalities were completely eliminated, an additional $64.5 billion could be expected to be added to Canada's GDP by 2036. (Harvey: 2001).***

As numerous studies and reports show, newcomers are faced with a series of systemic and non-systemic barriers to employment such as:

- A New Culture
- The Licensing Process
- No recognition for skills, experience, education
- Lack of sector-specific language training
- Discrimination - "Canadian Experience"
- Racism
- Lack of Information and access to resources
    - Newcomers
    - Employers
    - Service Providers

A recent study by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (The Facts are in! Newcomers' experiences in accessing regulated professions in Ontario) has revealed that:

- **In 2000 the unemployment rate of immigrant professionals was 18.2%, compared to 5.4% the Ontario average at the time**
- **60% of foreign-trained immigrants who took jobs unrelated to their training when they first came in Canada held the same job three years later**

- **Less than one-quarter of foreign-trained professionals who were employed were working in their exact field, while 47% were doing something irrelevant to their field**

During the past years SISO has gathered input from both employers and newcomers through surveys, focus groups, questionnaires, round table discussions and public forums. The conclusions and recommendations received from these two groups include:

- That information regarding requirements for alternative employment opportunities be compiled and made available to foreign-trained and employers
- Research the funding available and develop a one-stop Resource Centre for foreign-trained individuals
- The process of licensing of foreign-trained professionals contains systemic and non-systemic barriers. Eliminating those barriers is directly linked with information sharing and public education activities
- A booklet/newsletter or other means of communicating the benefits of hiring new immigrants
- Development sector-specific language training
- Development of programs aimed at training newcomers regarding the Canadian workplace, including job shadowing/mentorship/short work placements
- Development of a platform for discussions between all stakeholders regarding the process of licensing/accreditation
- Development of systems and mechanisms to help newcomers train/retrain for those sectors presenting a skills shortage, with emphasis on apprenticeship programs for tradespeople
- Tax incentives or Employer Tax Rebates for training/hiring initiatives

A questionnaire administrated randomly to 30 newcomers during a period of two weeks has revealed the following:

- 86% require more than one hour/day to conduct an effective job search
- 56% are unable to access employment resources
- 75% require assistance in writing resumes, cover letters, etc.
- 36% need assistance to understand the job postings
- 43% are able to access some information on licensing in the resource centres

Other comments made by newcomers:

- "We don't know yet: we don't know where these resources are in our area"
- "A new program is requested; i.e. coordination with industrial organization to send newcomers for further Canadian experience."
- "Help me in identifying areas of job opportunities"
- "About reading employment related information; it's very confusing to me to understand some abbreviations they use. I think that's the main problem for me."
- "I am finding difficulty in approaching the employer and even if I am able to approach them, they are asking for Canadian experience. How do I overcome this difficulty?"
- "I have been made to understand that the system of working in Canada is different compared to the way I used to work where I came from. I would be glad to learn more about the Canadian system."

In light of the feedback received Settlement and Integration Organization is proposing that the Hamilton Community undertakes the responsibility to develop and implement a Resource Centre for Internationally-Trained Professionals and Tradespeople, aimed at facilitating the process of integration of newcomers into the labour market by addressing the specific needs of foreign-trained individuals, employers and employment-service providers for access to information and resources pertaining to the process of licensing/accreditation, (alternative) employment, (self-) assessment tools, training and upgrading programs.

A Resource Centre designed specifically for new Canadians, would provide access to resources (computer, Internet, directories, etc.), and to specific information regarding:

- the process of licensing and accreditation for different professions and trades
- the specifics of different professions and trades in Canada
- self-assessment tools to identify gaps in skills and/or training
- training and upgrading programs available
- alternative employment opportunities available
- business directories and profiles
- labour market information for different sectors

The Centre would address issues and barriers, including:

- The lack of information and resources pertaining to alternative employment opportunities, training programs available, licensing requirements and skills assessment tools for foreign-trained professionals and tradespeople
- The lack of appropriate language skills, appropriate access to resources and support in using them
- The lack of information/resources regarding the licensing requirements for foreign-trained aimed at helping employers to improve their hiring practices
- The economic integration and self-sufficiency of newcomers
- The social integration and elimination of isolation for traditionally marginalized groups and ethnic communities
- The lack of awareness of the general community regarding issues and barriers to the employment of immigrants

The Resource Centre for Internationally-Trained Professionals and Tradespeople would be developed to provide resources and information specifically designed for foreign-trained individuals and employers interested in hiring them, would provide support in accessing and using the resources and would complement existing service gaps in a linguistically appropriate environment and from a culturally sensitive framework.

In order to determine the best approach to the issues and needs presented, the Ontario Trillium Foundation has expressed an interest in funding a Feasibility Study to determine the specifics of the Hamilton region related to the newcomers' integration into the labour market and to build community support for the Resource Centre for Foreign-Trained Professionals and Tradespeople.

2. The Consultation Meeting

On April 25, 2002, SISO has organized a Consultation Meeting with representatives of local, provincial and federal government, employers, training and education institutions, regulatory bodies and employment-service providers. Out of the seventy-six invitation sent, a number of fifty-nine indicated their interest in participating directly or indirectly into the process. Forty-four participants were present during the meeting and brought their direct input by filling the questionnaire presented and participating into one of the three working groups. (For a copy of the Agenda and a complete list of participants see attachments)

While the first part of the meeting was dedicated to a background presentation on issues and barriers identified to date, the second part was allocated for participants to individually answer to the questions presented and to discuss them in four working groups. The questions were designed to gather input from stakeholders regarding the development of the Feasibility Study and to facilitate community participation in the process.

The conclusions and recommendations the working groups have developed are summarized bellow:

Question #1:

"In your opinion, what are the main questions the Feasibility Study needs to answer?"

Recommendations:

- *Is another center necessary and why*
- *How would this service be different from what SISO provides*
- *Where would it be*
- *How many clients really need a specific center*
- *Is the issue really legislation and licensing, not resources*
- *What would the range of activities be for a new center*
- *What are the expected outcomes and how will be measured*
- *Do we need a resource center instead of training the employment counselors, facilitators, consultants who are already delivering services*
- *How would the new service be integrated into existing services*
- *Who pays for the center? Which ministries are already responsible and for what. Should private sector be encouraged to participate and how*
- *What do we do with issues that fall outside everyone's jurisdiction*
- *How do we address the issue of language skills*

Question #2

"In your opinion, what are the research methods that should be used by the study?"

Recommendations:

- Literature review (local labour market information)
- Review of existing similar models in other jurisdictions, countries
- Survey local employers, regulatory bodies and other stakeholders regarding regulatory requirements and barriers
- Use a Participatory Action Research
    - Focus Groups
    - Narrative methodology
    - Qualitative data – share experience of immigrants
    - Develop sustainable action plan
- Identify the demographics for review
    - Education
    - Former occupation vs. present occupation
    - Diversity of the labour force
- Cost-benefit model analysis
- Examine licensing and accreditation organizations and associations to offer fast tracking or improvements in recognizing foreign qualifications
- Evaluative component – establish measures of success and indicators
- Provide careful thought in the design of the research (invest properly)

Question #3

"In your opinion, who should be interviewed or surveyed for the purpose of this study?"

Recommendations:

- Determine Need:
    - Newcomers
    - Foreign-trained professionals and tradespeople
    - Employers and recruiters
    - Licensing bodies
    - Educators
    - All agencies involved with the unemployed
    - Cultural community leaders
- Determine Location:
    - Settlement workers
    - Organizations that launched similar ventures
    - People who have successfully transitioned into the workforce
- Determine Structure

Question #4:
"In your opinion, who are the main potential partners in the project?"

Recommendations:

- Public Employment Service Sector
- Private and not-for profit
- Professional and Trades Associations
- Federal and Provincial relevant ministries and departments:
    - HRDC
    - MTCU
    - Ministry of Education
    - Heritage Canada
    - Citizenship and Immigration Canada
    - Canada Customs
    - IEC
    - Training Board
    - DFAIT
    - Standards Branch
- Immigrants working in their field
- Chamber of Commerce
- Elected Officials
- Media
- Canada Trained Professionals
- Foreign Professional Associations
- CIDA
- DHC

3. Future Steps

Following the Consultation Meeting and the dissemination of the information gathered during the day, a number of participants have expressed their interest in continuing to participate in the process as members of a Steering Committee to provide advice and support into the design, development and dissemination of the Feasibility Study.

The Steering Committee will meet once a month, between June 2002 and October 2002, with the first meeting scheduled for June 28 from 9:00 am to 11:00 a.m. at SISO' office.

Participants to the Consultation Meeting are invited to forward recommendations regarding a third party consultant who might be suitable for conducting the Feasibility Study under the guidance of the Steering Committee. Recommendations should be forwarded by June 10, 2002 to the attention of: Aurelia Tokaci, Coordinator of Employment Services at Settlement and Integration Services Organization (atokaci@siso-ham.org).
A Request for Proposals will be developed by SISO and forwarded to selected candidates by June 12, 2002, with a deadline for application by June 25, 2002.

It is expected that the study would be conducted over a period of three months, starting July 5th and ending September 30, 2002.

The Feasibility Study will be made available to all participants in the Consultation Meeting, to all those participating directly or indirectly in the study, as well as to the general public.

Based on the conclusions and recommendations of the Feasibility Study, SISO will revise the initial Proposal for Funding of a Resource Centre for Foreign-Trained Professionals and Tradespeople and will forward the proposal to potential partners by October 30, 2002.

APPENDIX B:

Advisory Committee Membership

Membership - Project Advisory Committee

Chair:

Liz Robinson (Replaced by Judy Travis)	Hamilton Training Advisory Board

Committee Members (in no particular order):

Debbie Spence	Industry & Education Council
Chris Boag	Dofasco Inc.
Aurelia Tokaci	Settlement and Integration Services Organization
Morteza Jafarpour	Settlement and Integration Services Organization
Karen Bakker-Stephens	St. Elizabeth Home Care
Bev Archer	Job Finding Club
Susan Daw	Apprenticeship Office
Paul Faguy *	Hamilton Health Sciences Corporation
Tessa Armstrong *	Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
Dalbir Kalra	Amity
Ana Zapia	Philips Environmental
Raffaella Candiotto *	City of Hamilton
Julie Moote	Levi Strauss
Gayle Holmes *	Hamilton Health Sciences Corporation
Ron Birkett	Citizen & Immigration Canada
Angela Fortino	Visiting Homemakers Association
Ana Carias *	Social & Public Health Services, City of Hamilton
Chris Cutler	YMCA
Saida Ahmed	Women Without Borders
Denise Doyle	Chamber of Commerce
Monica Quinlan	United Way of Burlington & Greater Hamilton
Richard Johnson	Government of Canada
Ken Johnson	Government of Canada
Roger Parker	Ontario Works

* corresponding member

APPENDIX C:
Key Stakeholder Surveys:

Employment Service Provider
Foreign-Trained Professionals and Trades People
Local Employers

EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROVIDER SURVEY

The following survey is a part of a study being conducted by the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton (SPRC), under contract with Settlement and Integration Services Organization (SISO). The purpose of the study is to assess the feasibility of developing a local resource centre for foreign-trained professionals and trades people.

Newcomers to Canada often face unique barriers to employment, particularly if their professional or trade certification was earned in a foreign country. We are interested in the experiences of local employment services in supporting foreign trained professionals and trades people. Findings from the survey will be presented in aggregate terms, and no agency names will be reported.

Agency Name:_____

Is your agency mandated to serve a specific population (ie. Youth, women, older workers, etc.)

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No If "Yes", what is your target population?_____

1. Does your agency provide information on the following (check all that apply):
   - ❑ Assessing foreign credentials
   - ❑ English language training
   - ❑ Accreditation requirements of professional associations and trade unions for foreign trained persons
   - ❑ Other programs and services specific to foreign-trained professionals and trades people (please specify):

2. Newcomers to Canada may have a range of issues related to arriving in a new country, which may affect ones ability to find adequate employment. Does your agency provide direct support, information or make referrals for clients with settlement issues?
   - ❑ Provide direct support
   - ❑ Provide information
   - ❑ Make referrals
   - ❑ No supports or referral system in place

3. Language is sometimes a barrier to employment for newcomers to Canada. Does your agency provide service in languages other than English or French?

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

4. On average, how many clients visit your agency per week?

_____

5. Of the total number of client visits per week, approximately how many are foreign-trained professionals and trades people?

_____

6. Does your agency refer foreign-trained clients to other local agencies?

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

If "Yes", to which local agencies do you generally refer foreign-trained clients? (please list agencies)

_____
_____
_____

7. As a local employment service provider, do you see value in developing a specialized resource centre for foreign-trained professionals and trades people?

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

Comments:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Thank you for participating in our survey. Your input is important to us.

SURVEY OF FOREIGN-TRAINED PROFESSIONALS AND TRADES PEOPLE

The following survey will help us to understand some of the problems that foreign-trained professionals and trades people have in finding employment in their field.

LANGUAGE

1. Are you currently enrolled in an English language program?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No Completed a program

2. Have your English language skills been assessed?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

   2a. If "Yes", what is your English level based on the Canadian Language Benchmark?
   - ❑ LINC 1
   - ❑ LINC 2
   - ❑ LINC 3
   - ❑ LINC 4
   - ❑ LINK 5

3. Do you believe that your English skills are a problem when looking for employment?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

4. How could English language programs be provided to better meet your language needs?

   _____

   _____

   _____

CANADIAN EXPERIENCE

5. Do you have Canadian experience in your field?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

6. Do you believe that a lack of Canadian experience is a barrier to employment for newcomers?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

7. Would you consider volunteer (unpaid) work as a way to get Canadian experience?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

8. How else could local community services help you to get Canadian experience in your field?

_____

_____

_____

DISCRIMINATION

9. Have you experienced discrimination by employers when searching for work in your field?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

SERVICES/SUPPORTS

10. Other than SISO, have you used any other employment services in Hamilton?
    - ❑ Yes
    - ❑ No

    10a. If "Yes" were these services helpful?
    - ❑ Yes
    - ❑ No

    10b. Why? Why not?

_____

_____

_____

11. What types of services would be most helpful to newcomers in finding employment in their field? (please list)

1._____

2._____

3._____

ABOUT YOU

Gender:
- ❑ Male
- ❑ Female

Age:

- ❑ 15 to 25
- ❑ 36 to 45
- ❑ 26 to 35
- ❑ 56 to 65

Number of years/months in Canada: _____(years or months)

Field of study: _____

Are you working now?

- ❑ No
- ❑ Temporary or contract work
- ❑ Part-time (in your field)
- ❑ Part-time (not in your field)
- ❑ Full-time (in your field)
- ❑ Full-time (not in your field)

Thank you for completing our survey. Your input is important to us.

SURVEY OF LOCAL EMPLOYERS

The following survey is a part of a study being conducted by the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton (SPRC), under contract with Settlement and Integration Services Organization (SISO). The purpose of the study is to assess the feasibility of developing a local resource center for foreign-trained professionals and trades people.

This survey is based on findings from a 2002 survey of local employers, conducted through SISO. From an employer's perspective, the survey identified specific barriers to employment for foreign-trained professionals and trades people. We are now interested in assessing the level of interest and commitment, on the part of local employers, to overcoming these barriers.
Thank you for your participation. Your information and ideas are important to us.

Company Name:_____

Type of business/company: _____

Number of employees:

- ❑ 1 to 5
- ❑ 6 to 10
- ❑ 11 to 25
- ❑ 26 to 50
- ❑ 51 to 100
- ❑ Hundreds
- ❑ Thousands

In the previous survey, employers identified language, no recognition of foreign experience/credentials, Canadian licensing, discrimination and, a lack of Canadian experience as the most significant barriers to employment for foreign-trained professionals and trades people.

1. As strategies to overcome language skills as a barrier to employment, would your business/company consider the following options? (please check all that apply)
   - ❑ Promote language skills training in the work place
   - ❑ Provide language training to employees in-house
   - ❑ Allow time off to new/existing employees for language training
   - ❑ Working with other employer and organizations to develop broad community strategies

- ❑ Other strategies (please specify):_____

2. As a means to addressing professional licensing requirements as a barrier to employment for foreign-trained professionals and trades people, would your business/company be interested in partnering with other local employer and community groups in lobbying for changes from professional associations?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

3. As a strategy to support foreign-trained professionals and trades people in gaining Canadian work experience, would you business/company consider the following options? (please check all that apply)
   - ❑ Provide volunteer opportunities for foreign-trained professionals and trades people
   - ❑ To work with an outside agency to develop transitional training and workplace integration programs
   - ❑ partner with local organizations to provide co-op placement opportunities
   - ❑ Other strategies (please specify):

4. As a strategy toward better understanding foreign credentials and experience, would your business/company access a service that assesses foreign credentials and experience by Canadian standards?
   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

5. As strategies toward eliminating discriminatory hiring practices that result in barriers to employment for foreign-trained professionals and trades people, would your business/company consider the following options? (please check all that apply)
   - ❑ Post educational materials in the workplace
   - ❑ Develop/adopt bias-free hiring protocols internally
   - ❑ Partner with an outside agency to develop bias-free hiring protocols
   - ❑ Send employees to anti discrimination training outside the organization
   - ❑ Provide anti-discrimination training
   - ❑ Other strategies (please specify):

6. As a strategy to identify qualified workers for positions within your business/company, would you be willing to work with an outside agency that supports foreign-trained professionals and trades people in becoming job-ready?

   ❑ Yes
   ❑ No

From your perspective, how else could an outside agency help to eliminate barriers to employment for foreign-trained professionals and trades people?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for you participation